(c) The measures taken by the Government include the following:

(i) Increased allocation of wheat under the Open Market Sale Scheme;

(ii) Freeze on the Central Issue Prices of wheat and rice under the Targeted Public Distribution system (TPDS) in order to encourage more off-take;

(iii) Decision to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat for augmenting the availability in the southern Zone;

(iv) Ensuring adequate availability of stocks of wheat and rice for the TPDS and Welfare Schemes in all the States of the country.

(v) Daily Monitoring of retail and wholesale proces of wheat and rice.

Consumer goods through FPSs

602. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are in talks with various State Government to encourage sale of new categories of consumer goods, including petroleum products, biscuits, soaps and toiletries, through fair price shops;

(b) if so, the status of the dialogue and response from the States, so far; and

(c) the other steps being taken to popularize the use of fair price shops?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) At present the Central Government makes available wheat, rice, sugar and K. Oil under the Public Distribution System to the State Government for distribution through the Fair Price Shops (FPS). In order to increase the viability of FPSs, under the System, the State Governments have been advised to allow the FPSs, to deal with other items of daily consumption/use also. Some States have already allowed sale of such items through the FPSs. For LPG/Kerosene, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has not agreed with the proposal as it is

not a practical proposition to put domestic LPG in FPS as LPG is not a rationed good. LPG is a purely commercial good marketed by Government Oil Companies through their distributors appointed as per their commercial consideration.

FPSs have also been allowed to be used as STD booths.

Cases with consumer courts

603. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed the cases pending with the consumer courts;

(b) if so, the details of the complaints pending with National Consumer Forum, various State consumer courts etc.

(c) whether any action plan has been formulated for speedy disposal of the complaints;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of financial assistance provided to State for setting up new consumer courts and also strengthening the existing ones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Union Government in coordination with National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) and Secretaries in-charge of Consumer Affairs in the States/Union Territories reviews the functioning of the consumer fora including the cases pending with them, through Conferences, meetings, periodical returns, personal visits and letters and also suggest remedial measures wherever shortcomings are observed on a periodical basis.

(b) The details detailing the number of cases filed/disposed off/pending in NCDRC, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (SCDRC) and District Fora (State-wise) as reported by NCDRC, is enclosed as statement I and II. (*See below*)

(c) and (d) The following important steps have been taken by the Government for speedy disposal of cases: